



Present: Laila Barr; Dan Chavre; Ray Day, Jr.; Kathy Dunn (provisional)*; Dave Elliott, vice-chair; Jane Kuechle (provisional)*; Miranda Leidich, Ed Miller, chair; Bria Schlottman (provisional)*; Tina Shereen; Roger Thordarson

Excused: Kumiko Huff (provisional)*, Carla Saulter

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; Arthur Thornbury, Senior Legislative Analyst, King County Council staff; Harold Taniguchi, KCDOT Director; Jill Krecklow, KCDOT Finance and Administrative Services Manager; Betty Gulledge-Bennett, KCDOT Communications and Community Relations Manager; Bill Greene, KCDOT Finance Manager

Miller opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Provisional members Kathy Dunn, Jane Kuechle and Bria Schlottman introduced themselves to the group. Miller welcomed the new members, and current members introduced themselves in return.

Metro's Financial Challenges

Thornbury presented the Council's proposed Metro budget to the group. It differed markedly from the Executive's proposed budget. A proposed 2009 fare increase of 50 cents would instead be phased into two 25 cent increases scheduled for 2009 and 2010. The Council would preserve more reserve funds for future use and increase the number of staff reductions. The figures used to calculate diesel fuel purchases would be revised to reflect lower diesel prices. Both the Council and Metro agree that preserving current service and the service promised by Transit Now are the top priorities during this budget crisis. Prior to this presentation, the Council had adopted the two-phase fare increase.

TAC members offered several comments on Thornbury's presentation. Elliott asked why the Council had decided to split the fare increase into two phases. He said 50 cents was not too much to ask, given the challenges facing Metro. Day asked why \$1 million for two Council-authorized audits was not being applied instead to the Metro operating budget. Thornbury replied that the audit would give the Council and Metro invaluable information when addressing the financial challenges.

Taniguchi asked to address the TAC. He said that Metro and KCDOT management were very concerned about the lack of analysis given to the Council's proposal. The Council is directing Metro to make cuts, but not providing direction on how those can be done. Metro is constantly audited by both the state and federal authorities. Metro has been tasked with introducing the SmartCard, opening the transit tunnel to Link Light Rail and devising transit plans for the Alaskan Way Viaduct in 2009. By holding transit service harmless, the cuts can only come from planning sections that are tasked with these three major projects. Taniguchi said that the Council's budget proposal had huge

*Note: Provisional members have been nominated by the Executive and have the support of their individual Council members, but have not yet been confirmed by the whole Council.

implications, and not enough time has been given to analyze those implications before the Council adopts the budget.

TAC members offered additional comments: Leidich asked whether or not a risk analysis had been conducted on the proposed budget. Thornbury replied that no systematic risk analysis had been done by the Council or staff. Miller stated that reserve funds are supposed to be set aside for just these kinds of emergencies. He also said that the income from wrapped buses, which the Council prohibited in 2006, could have paid for the audit without harming Metro's budget. Elliott said that the Council was betting that the economy would improve in the next year, and that fuel prices would continue to fall. Neither of those outcomes was assured. Deferring the costs of projects simply means that projects will eventually cost more. Chavre said that the public doesn't like being "nicked a little bit here and a little bit there." He said the fare increase should have been done all at once, and that riders should be paying for the cost of their ride. Day said that the County had gotten into the ferry district business at a very bad time. The new taxes for the ferries could have been applied to solving Metro's problems.

Kuechle asked what kinds of new revenue streams were being proposed by Metro. Taniguchi replied that many solutions are being explored. For example, Metro may ask the legislature to re-consider imposing a motor vehicle excise tax, or giving King County the authority to do so. There have also been discussions about giving King County the right to impose utility taxes.

At the end of the discussion, Shereen moved and Day seconded that the TAC authorize Miller to sign a letter to the Council expressing support for the Executive's budget proposal, and asking that the Council re-consider using reserves. The motion passed unanimously. Ed Miller and Ray Day, Jr. were appointed the designated spokespersons for the group, and both committed to attending the Monday, November 24th meeting of the Council to testify.

Retreat Date

Shereen moved, Day seconded that the TAC annual retreat date be scheduled for Saturday, January 31. Passed unanimously.

Op-Ed Submission

Miller reported that the op-ed piece approved by the group and submitted to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer had not been published. He proposed editing the piece to a more suitable length and re-submitting it. Leidich asked that the edited version be circulated to the group prior to submission and Miller agreed.

Committee Business

- De Michele said that she is continuing to recruit for the one open seat left on the TAC.
- Elliott reported on the October Regional Transit Committee meeting held in Bellevue.
- Day, Miller and Barr reported on their respective Sounding Board and Advisory Panel groups.

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- Due to the lengthy nature of the TAC discussion, the remainder of the November agenda was deferred to the December meeting.

Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.